

Amendments to the claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-32 (Cancelled).

33. (Previously presented) An instrument insertable in a body cavity for dilating said cavity comprising:

a frame having an opening through a centerline thereof;

a set of blades circumferentially spaced relative to said centerline, each having a first end projecting beyond a first side of said frame section, a second end section projecting beyond a second side opposite said first side of said frame and an intermediate section pivotally connected to said frame for pivotal movement relative to said frame in a plane including said centerline;

means operatively interconnecting said blades and said frame biasing the first ends thereof together into abutting relation; and

means mounted on said frame and operatively engageable with said blades for biasingly restraining the pivotal movement of said blades,

whereby with said first end sections biased together, said engaging first end sections may be inserted into said cavity with said frame disposed in the exterior thereof, said second end sections may be drawn together against the biasing action of said first mentioned biasing means to cause a separation of said first end sections and thus dilate said cavity to permit visual access to said cavity through said frame, with said restraining means biasingly maintaining said first end sections apart, and upon completion of any procedure with which said instrument is used, said restraining means may be overcome to cause said first end section to pivot into engagement with one another to permit said first end sections of said instrument to be withdrawn from said cavity.

34. (Currently Amended) An instrument according to claim 33 wherein outer surfaces of the first end sections of said blades are provided with ~~merge~~ merging and contoured surfaces which cooperate when said first end sections engage to provide an elongated object with smooth surfaces facilitating the insertion and removal of said engaged first end sections into and out of said cavity.

35. (Previously presented) An instrument according to claim 33 wherein each of the end sections of each of said blades is disposed at an angle relative to the intermediate section thereof.

36. (Previously presented) An instrument according to claim 33 wherein said means for biasing the first ends of said blades together into abutting relation comprises a set of springs each interconnecting said a blade and said frame.

37. (Previously presented) An instrument according to claim 33 wherein said means biasingly restraining said pivotal movement of said blades comprises a set of blocks each supported on said frame and biased into engagement with a surface of one of said blades.

38. (Previously presented) An instrument according to claim 37 wherein said block is provided with a surface of a nonplanar configuration engaging said blade, restraining displacement of said engaging blade relative to said block .

39. (Previously presented) An instrument according to claim 33 wherein said frame comprises a unitary, annular member..

40. (Previously presented) An instrument according to claim 33 wherein said frame comprises a unitary member having a polygonal configuration.

41. (Currently Amended) An instrument according to claim 33 wherein the second end section of each of said blades is pivotally connected to an outer portion of said frame, said intermediate section thereof extends to one side of said frame and into the opening thereof and said

Amendment to Office Action Dated December 15, 2008
U.S. Appln. No. 10/773,346
Atty. Docket No.: 8377.002.US0000

first end section thereof extends along said centerline, when said first end section-sections are disposed in abutting relation.